

# EVERY-DAY-CHARACTERS

BY

Winthrop Mackworth Praed with  
illustrations by Cecil Aldin



1896 Kegan Paul Trench Trubner Co



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• EVERY-DAY •  
CHARACTERS



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• BY •

W. M. PRAED

ILLUSTRATED

• BY •

CECIL • ALDIN

KEGAN • PAUL

TRENCH

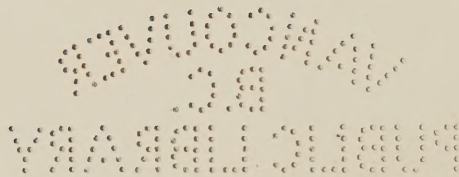
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# THE · VICAR



*"And make the puppy dance a jig,  
When he began to quote Augustine"—p. 13.*



# THE · VICAR

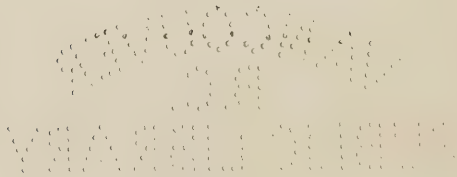
**S**OME years ago, ere time and taste  
Had turned our parish topsy-  
turvy,

When Darnel Park was Darnel Waste,  
And roads as little known as scurvy,  
The man who lost his way, between  
St. Mary's Hill and Sandy Thicket,  
Was always shown across the green,  
And guided to the Parson's wicket.





BACK flew the bolt of lissom lath ;  
Fair Margaret, in her tidy kirtle,  
Led the lorn traveller up the path,  
Through clean-clipt rows of box and myrtle ;  
And Don and Sancho, Tramp and Tray,  
Upon the parlour steps collected,  
Wagged all their tails, and seemed to say—  
“ Our master knows you—you’re expected.”







PROSE the Reverend Dr. Brown,  
Uprose the Doctor's winsome  
marrow ;

The lady laid her knitting down,

Her husband clasped his ponderous Barrow ;



Whate'er the stranger's caste or creed,

Pundit or Papist, saint or sinner,

He found a stable for his steed,

And welcome for himself, and dinner.



F, when he reached his journey's  
end,

And warmed himself in Court or

College,

He had not gained an honest friend

And twenty curious scraps of knowledge,—

If he departed as he came,

With no new light on love or liquor,—

Good sooth, the traveller was to blame,

And not the Vicarage, nor the Vicar.







IS talk was like a stream, which runs  
With rapid change from rocks to  
roses :

It slipped from politics to puns,  
It passed from Mahomet to Moses ;



Beginning with the laws which keep  
The planets in their radiant courses,  
And ending with some precept deep  
For dressing eels, or shoeing horses.



E was a shrewd and sound Divine,  
Of loud Dissent the mortal terror;  
And when, by dint of page and line,  
He 'stablished Truth, or startled Error,



The Baptist found him far too deep ;  
The Deist sighed with saving sorrow ;  
And the lean Levite went to sleep,  
And dreamed of tasting pork to-morrow.





THIS sermon never said or showed  
That Earth is foul, that Heaven  
is gracious,  
Without refreshment on the road  
From Jerome, or from Athanasius :



And sure a righteous zeal inspired  
The hand and head that penned and planned  
them,  
For all who understood admired,  
And some who did not understand them.

H
 E wrote, too, in a quiet way,  
 Small treatises, and smaller verses,  
 And sage remarks on chalk and clay,  
 And hints to noble Lords—and nurses ;



True histories of last year's ghost,  
 Lines to a ringlet, or a turban,  
 And trifles for the *Morning Post*,  
 And nothings for Sylvanus Urban.



He did not think all mischief fair,  
Although he had a knack of  
joking ;  
He did not make himself a bear,  
Although he had a taste for smoking ;



And when religious sects ran mad,  
He held, in spite of all his learning,  
That if a man's belief is bad,  
It will not be improved by burning.





AND he was kind, and loved to sit  
In the low hut or garnished  
cottage,  
And praise the farmer's homely wit,  
And share the widow's homelier pottage :



At his approach complaint grew mild ;  
And when his hand unbarred the shutter,  
The clammy lips of fever smiled  
The welcome which they could not utter.



He always had a tale for me  
Of Julius Cæsar, or of Venus;  
From him I learnt the rule of three,

Cat's cradle, leap-frog, and *Quæ genus* :

I used to singe his powdered wig,

To steal the staff he put such trust in,

And make the puppy dance a jig,

When he began to quote Augustine.





LACK the change! in vain I look  
For haunts in which my boy-  
hood trifled,—

The level lawn, the trickling brook,  
The trees I climbed, the beds I rifled :  
The church is larger than before ;  
You reach it by a carriage entry ;  
It holds three hundred people more,  
And pews are fitted up for gentry.







IT in the Vicar's seat : you'll hear  
The doctrine of a gentle Johnian,  
Whose hand is white, whose tone  
is clear,

Whose phrase is very Ciceronian.

Where is the old man laid?—look down,

And construe on the slab before you,

*"Hic jacet GVLIELMVS BROWN,*

*Vir nullâ non donandus lauru."*



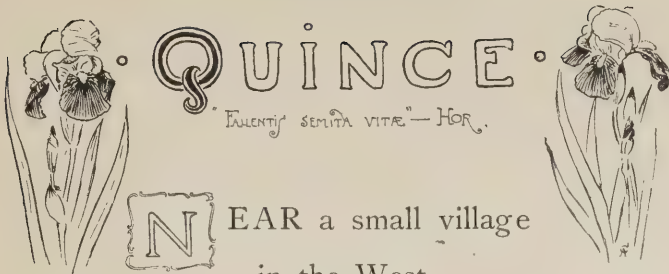


QUINCE





*"Some darkly hinted that his Grace  
Did nothing, great or small, without him"—p. 28.*



Where many very worthy people  
Eat, drink, play whist, and do their best  
To guard from evil Church and steeple,  
There stood—alas! it stands no more!—  
A tenement of brick and plaster,  
Of which, for forty years and four,  
My good friend Quince was lord and master.





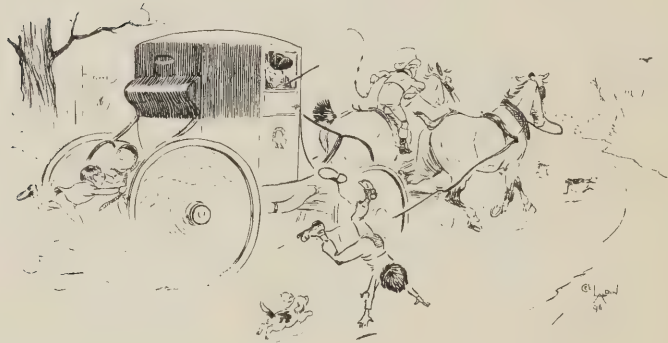
WELCOME was he in hut and hall

To maids and matrons, peers

and peasants ;

He won the sympathies of all

By making puns, and making presents.



Though all the parish were at strife,

He kept his counsel, and his carriage,

And laughed, and loved a quiet life,

And shrank from Chancery suits—and

marriage.



OUND was his claret—and his head;  
Warm was his double ale—and  
feelings;

His partner at the whist club said  
That he was faultless in his dealings:



He went to church but once a week;  
Yet Dr. Poundtext always found him  
An upright man, who studied Greek,  
And liked to see his friends around him.





SYLUMS, hospitals, and schools,  
He used to swear, were made  
to cozen ;



All who subscribed to them were fools,—  
And he subscribed to half a dozen :

It was his doctrine that the poor  
Were always able, never willing ;



And so the beggar at his door  
Had first abuse, and then—a shilling.

§OME public principles he had,  
But was no flatterer, nor fretter;  
He rapped his box when things  
were bad,  
And said "I cannot make them better!"



And much he loathed the patriot's snort,  
And much he scorned the placeman's snuffle;  
And cut the fiercest quarrels short  
With—"Patience, gentlemen—and shuffle!"

F
 OR full ten years his pointer Speed  
 Had couched beneath her  
 master's table ;  
 For twice ten years his old white steed  
 Had fattened in his master's stable ;



Old Quince averred, upon his troth,  
 They were the ugliest beasts in Devon ;  
 And none knew why he fed them both,  
 With his own hands, six days in seven.

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WHENE'ER they heard his ring  
or knock,  
Quicker than thought, the village  
slatterns

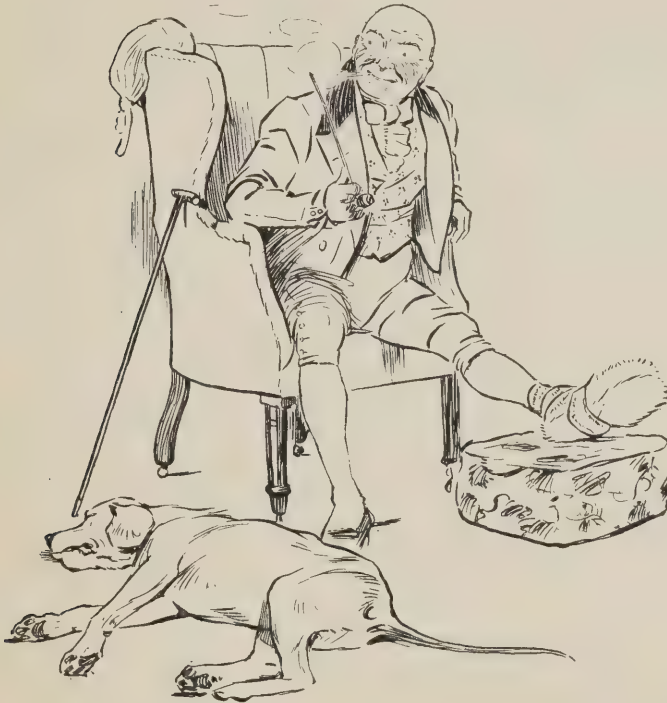
Flung down the novel, smoothed the frock,  
And took up Mrs. Glasse, and patterns ;



Adine was studying bakers' bills ;  
Louisa looked the queen of knitters ;  
Jane happened to be hemming frills ;  
And Bell, by chance, was making fritters.



**B**UT all was vain ; and while decay  
Came, like a tranquil moonlight  
o'er him,  
And found him gouty still, and gay,  
With no fair nurse to bless or bore him,



His rugged smile and easy-chair,  
His dread of matrimonial lectures,  
His wig, his stick, his powdered hair,  
Were themes for very strange conjectures.



OME sages thought the stars above  
Had crazed him with excess of  
knowledge ;

Some heard he had been crost in love

Before he came away from college ;

Some darkly hinted that his Grace

Did nothing, great or small, without him ;

Some whispered, with a solemn face,

That there was "something odd about him !"





FOUND him, at threescore and  
ten,

A single man, but bent quite  
double ;

Sickness was coming on him then

To take him from a world of trouble :



He prosed of slipping down the hill,

Discovered he grew older daily ;

One frosty day he made his will,—

The next, he sent for Doctor Bailey.

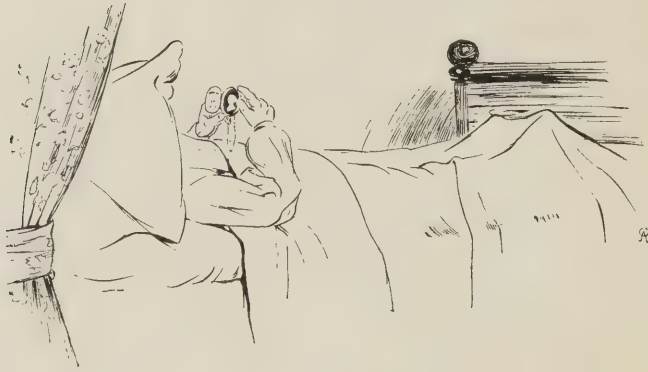


AND so he lived,—and so he died!—

When last I sat beside his pillow

He shook my hand, and “Ah!” he cried

“Penelope must wear the willow.



Tell her I hugged her rosy chain

While life was flickering in the socket ;

And say, that when I call again,

I'll bring a licence in my pocket.



'VE left my house and grounds to  
Fag,—

I hope his master's shoes will  
suit him ;

And I've bequeathed to you my nag,

To feed him for my sake,—or shoot him.



The Vicar's wife will take old Fox,—

She'll find him an uncommon mouser,—

And let her husband have my box,

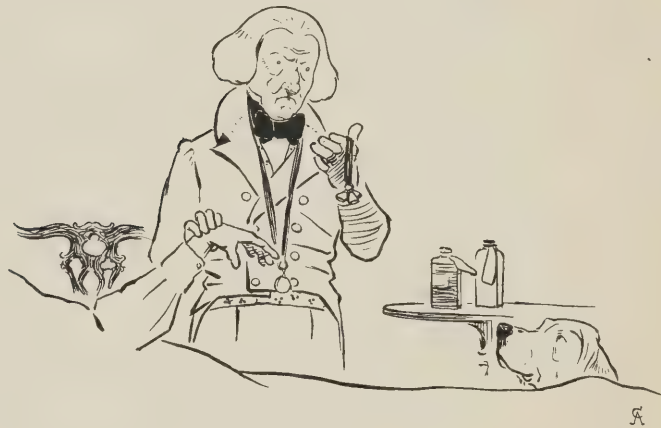
My Bible, and my Assmanshauser.





HETHER I ought to die or not,  
My Doctors cannot quite deter-  
mine ;

It's only clear that I shall rot,  
And be, like Priam, food for vermin.



My debts are paid :—but Nature's debt  
Almost escaped my recollection :  
Tom!—we shall meet again ;—and yet  
I cannot leave you my direction ! ”

THE · BELLE · OF THE · BALL-ROOM



*"Hands across and down the middle"—p. 36.*

## THE • BELLE • OF THE • BALL-ROOM

*"Il faut juger des femmes depuis la chaussure jusqu'à la coiffure exclusivement, à peu près comme on mesure le poisson entre queue et tête."—LA BRUYERE.*

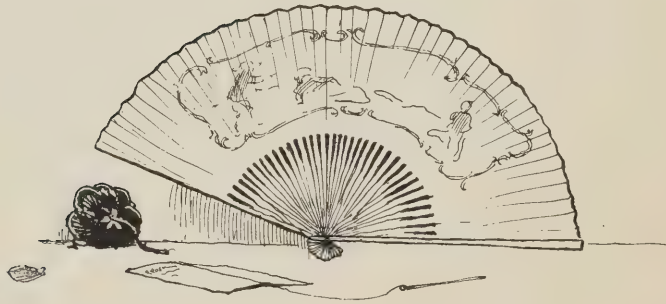
**Y**EARS—years ago,—ere yet my dreams  
Had been of being wise or  
witty,—  
Ere I had done with writing themes,  
Or yawned o'er this infernal Chitty;—



Years—years ago,—while all my joy  
Was in my fowling-piece and filly,—  
In short, while I was yet a boy,  
I fell in love with Laura Lily.

I SAW her at the County Ball :  
There, when the sounds of flute and  
fiddle

Gave signal sweet in that old hall  
Of hands across and down the middle,  
Hers was the subtlest spell by far  
Of all that set young hearts romancing ;  
She was our queen, our rose, our star ;  
And then she danced—O Heaven, her  
dancing !





DARK was her hair, her hand was white ;  
Her voice was exquisitely tender ;  
Her eyes were full of liquid light ;  
I never saw a waist so slender !



Her every look, her every smile,  
Shot right and left a score of arrows ;  
I thought 'twas Venus from her isle,  
And wondered where she'd left her sparrows.

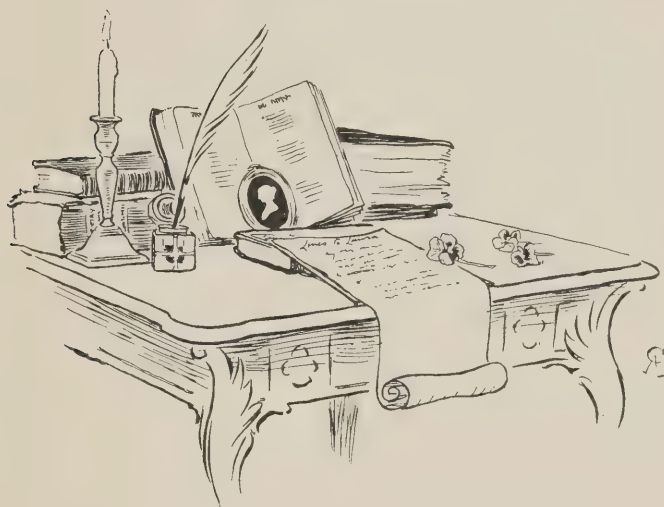
SHE talked,—of politics or prayers,—  
Of Southey's prose or Words-  
worth's sonnets,—  
Of dangles—or of dancing bears,  
Of battles—or the last new bonnets,



By candlelight, at twelve o'clock,  
To me it mattered not a tittle ;  
If those bright lips had quoted Locke,  
I might have thought they murmured Little.

THROUGH sunny May, through sultry  
June,

I loved her with a love eternal ;  
I spoke her praises to the moon,  
I wrote them to the *Sunday Journal* :



My mother laughed ; I soon found out  
That ancient ladies have no feeling :  
My father frowned ; but how should gout  
See any happiness in kneeling ?

SHE was the daughter of a Dean,  
Rich, fat, and rather apoplectic ;  
She had one brother, just thirteen,  
Whose colour was extremely hectic ;



Her grandmother for many a year  
Had fed the parish with her bounty ;  
Her second cousin was a peer,  
And Lord Lieutenant of the County.

BUT titles, and the three per cents.,  
And mortgages, and great relations,  
And India bonds, and tithes, and rents,  
Oh what are they to love's sensations?



Black eyes, fair forehead, clustering locks—  
Such wealth, such honours, Cupid chooses ;  
He cares as little for the Stocks,  
As Baron Rothschild for the Muses.

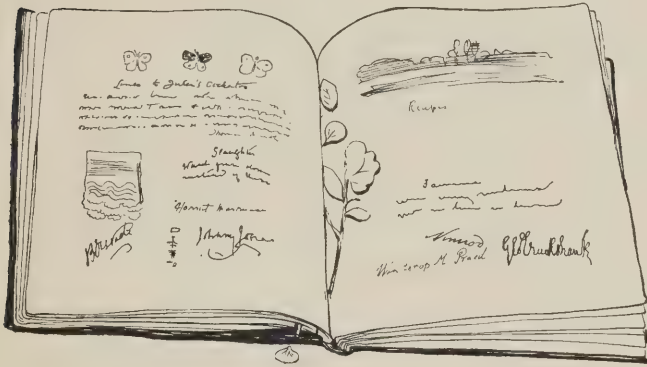


SHE sketched; the vale, the wood, the  
 beach,  
 Grew lovelier from her pencil's  
 shading :  
 She botanised ; I envied each  
 Young blossom in her boudoir fading :



She warbled Handel ; it was grand ;  
 She made the Catalani jealous :  
 She touched the organ ; I could stand  
 For hours and hours to blow the bellows.

SHE kept an album, too, at home,  
 Well filled with all an album's  
 glories ;  
 Paintings of butterflies, and Rome,  
 Patterns for trimmings, Persian stories ;



Soft songs to Julia's cockatoo,  
 Fierce odes to Famine and to Slaughter,  
 And autographs of Prince Leboo,  
 And recipes for elder-water.

AND she was flattered, worshipped, bored ;  
Her steps were watched, her dress  
was noted ;  
Her poodle dog was quite adored,  
Her sayings were extremely quoted ;

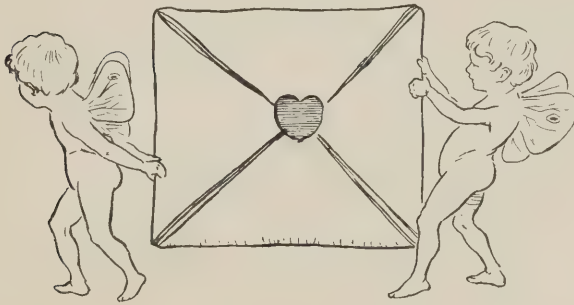


She laughed, and every heart was glad,  
As if the taxes were abolished ;  
She frowned, and every look was sad,  
As if the Opera were demolished.

SHE smiled on many, just for fun,—  
I knew that there was nothing  
in it ;

I was the first—the only one

Her heart had thought of for a minute.—



I knew it, for she told me so,

In phrase which was divinely moulded ;

She wrote a charming hand,—and oh !

How sweetly all her notes were folded !

O UR love was like most other loves ;—  
A little glow, a little shiver,  
A rose-bud, and a pair of gloves,  
And “Fly not yet”—upon the river ;



Some jealousy of some one's heir,  
Some hope of dying broken-hearted,  
A miniature, a lock of hair,  
The usual vows,—and then we parted.

WE parted; months and years rolled by;  
We met again four summers after:  
Our parting was all sob and sigh;  
Our meeting was all mirth and laughter:



For in my heart's most secret cell  
There had been many other lodgers;  
And she was not the ball-room's Belle,  
But only—Mrs. Something Rogers!

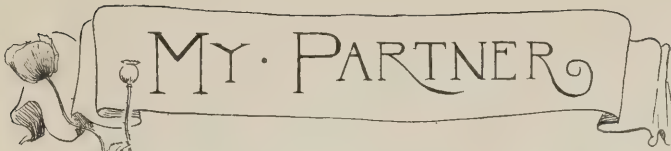




# MY PARTNER



*"I danced last year my first quadrille  
With old Sir Geoffrey's daughter"—p. 51.*

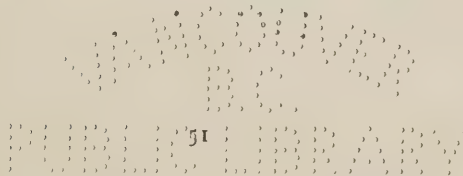


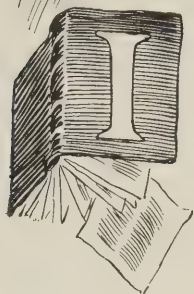
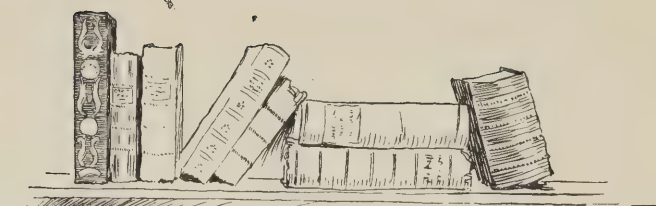
# MY PARTNER



T Cheltenham, where one  
drinks one's fill  
Of folly and cold water,  
I danced last year my first  
quadrille

With old Sir Geoffrey's daughter.  
Her cheek with summer's rose might vie,  
When summer's rose is newest ;  
Her eyes were blue as autumn's sky,  
When autumn's sky is bluest ;  
And well my heart might deem her one  
Of life's most precious flowers,  
For half her thoughts were of its sun,  
And half were of its showers.





SPOKE of Novels : " Vivian Grey "

Was positively charming,  
And " Almack's " infinitely gay,  
And " Frankenstein " alarming ;  
I said " De Vere " was chastely told,  
Thought well of " Herbert  
Lacy,"  
Called Mr. Banim's sketches  
" bold,"

And Lady Morgan's " racy ;"  
I vowed that last new thing of Hook's  
Was vastly entertaining :  
And Laura said—" I doat on books,  
Because it's always raining !"



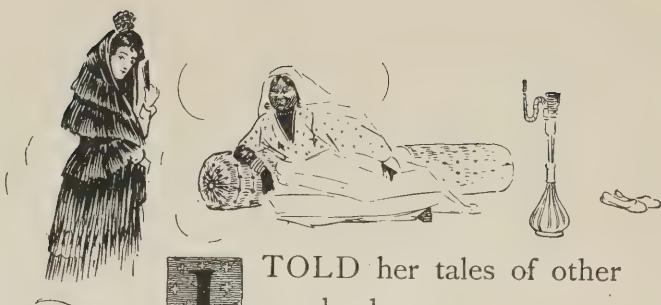


TALKED of Music's gorgeous fane ;

I raved about Rossini,  
 Hoped Ronzi would come back again,  
 And criticised Pacini ;  
 I wished the chorus-singers dumb,  
 The trumpets more pacific,  
 And eulogised Brocard's *aplomb*,  
 And voted Paul "terrific !"  
 What cared she for Medea's pride,  
 Or Desdemona's sorrow ?  
 "Alas !" my beauteous listener sighed,  
 "We must have rain to-morrow !"

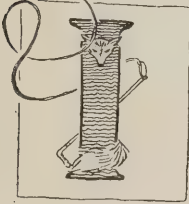






**I** TOLD her tales of other  
lands ;  
Of ever-boiling fountains,  
Of poisonous lakes and barren sands,  
Vast forests, trackless mountains :  
I painted bright Italian skies,  
I lauded Persian roses,  
Coined similes for Spanish eyes,  
And jests for Indian noses ;  
I laughed at Lisbon's love of mass,  
Vienna's dread of treason :  
And Laura asked me—where the glass  
Stood, at Madrid, last season ?





BROACHED whate'er had gone  
its rounds,  
The week before, of scandal ;  
What made Sir Luke lay down  
his hounds,

And Jane take up her Handel ;  
Why Julia walked 'upon the heath,  
With the pale moon above her ;  
Where Flora lost her false front teeth,  
And Anne her falser lover ;  
How Lord de B. and Mrs. L.  
Had crossed the sea together :  
My shuddering partner cried "*O Ciel !*  
How *could* they,—in such weather ?"





AS she a Blue?—I put my trust  
 In strata, petals, gases ;  
 A boudoir-pedant? I discussed  
 The toga and the fasces ;  
 A Cockney-Muse? I mouthed a  
 deal

Of folly from "Endymion ;"  
 A saint? I praised the pious zeal  
 Of Messrs. Way and Simeon ;  
 A politician?—it was vain  
 To quote the morning paper ;  
 The horrid phantoms came again,  
 Rain, Hail, and Snow, and Vapour.



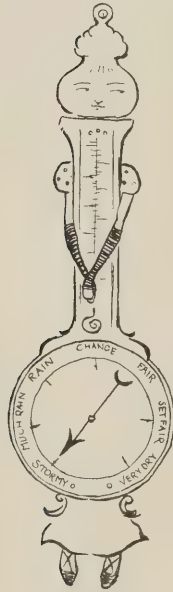


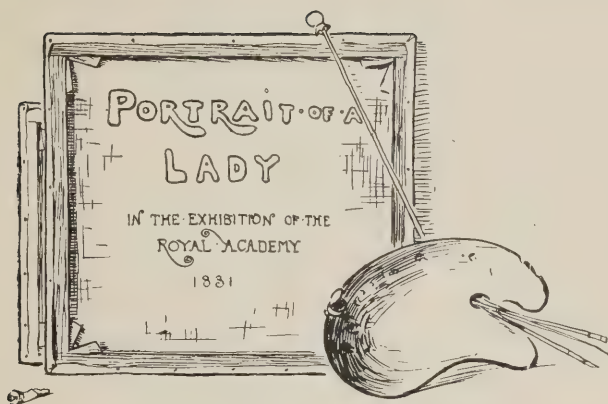
**F**LAT flattery was my only chance :  
I acted deep devotion,  
Found magic in her every glance,  
Grace in her every motion ;  
I wasted all a stripling's lore,  
Prayer, passion, folly, feeling ;  
And wildly looked upon the floor,  
And mildly on the ceiling.  
I envied gloves upon her arm  
And shawls upon her shoulder ;  
And, when my worship was most warm,—  
She—"never found it colder."





**I** DON'T object to wealth or land ;  
 And she will have the giving  
 Of an extremely pretty hand,  
 Some thousands, and a living.  
 She makes silk purses, broiders stools,  
 Sings sweetly, dances finely,  
 Paints screens, subscribes to Sunday-schools,  
 And sits a horse divinely.  
 But to be linked for life to her!—  
 The desperate man who tried it  
 Might marry a Barometer  
 And hang himself beside it !

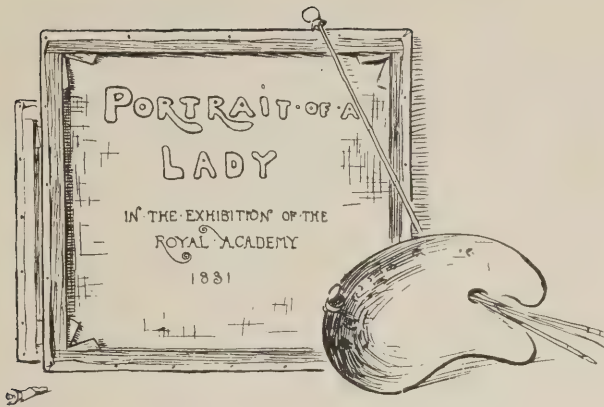








*"What are you, Lady?—naught is here  
To tell us of your name or story"—p. 61.*



WHAT are you, Lady?—naught is here  
To tell us of your name or story,  
To claim the gazer's smile or tear,  
To dub you Whig, or damn you Tory;  
It is beyond a poet's skill  
To form the slightest notion, whether  
We e'er shall walk through one quadrille,  
Or look upon one moon together.



YOU'RE very pretty!—all the world  
Are talking of your bright brow's  
splendour,  
And of your locks, so softly curled,  
And of your hands, so white and slender;  
Some think you're blooming in Bengal;  
Some say you're blowing in the City;  
Some know you're nobody at all:  
I only feel—you're very pretty.



BUT bless my heart! it's very wrong;  
You're making all our belles fero-  
cious;

Anne "never saw a chin so long;"

And Laura thinks your dress "atrocious;"

And Lady Jane, who now and then

Is taken for the village steeple,

Is sure you can't be four feet ten,

And "wonders at the taste of people."



S OON pass the praises of a face ;  
Swift fades the very best vermilion ;  
Fame rides a most prodigious pace ;  
Oblivion follows on the pillion ;  
And all who in these sultry rooms  
To-day have stared, and pushed, and fainted,  
Will soon forget your pearls and plumes,  
As if they never had been painted.



YOU'LL be forgotten—as old debts

By persons who  
are used to  
borrow;

Forgotten — as the  
sun that sets,  
When shines a  
new one on the  
morrow;

Forgotten—like the  
luscious peach

That blessed the schoolboy last September;  
Forgotten—like a maiden speech,  
Which all men praise, but none remember.





YET, ere you sink into the stream  
That whelms alike sage, saint, and  
martyr,  
And soldier's sword, and minstrel's theme,  
And Canning's wit, and Gatton's charter,  
Here, of the fortunes of your youth,  
My fancy weaves her dim conjectures,  
Which have, perhaps, as much of truth  
As passion's vows, or Cobbett's lectures.



WAS'T in the  
north, or in  
the south

That summer  
breezes rocked  
your cradle?

And had you in

your baby mouth

A wooden or a silver ladle?

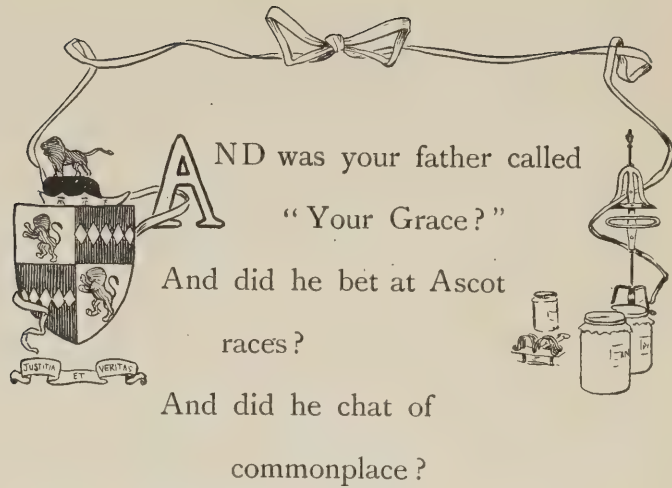
And was your first unconscious sleep

By Brownie banned, or blessed by Fairy?

And did you wake to laugh or weep?

And were you christened Maud or Mary?





And did he fill a score of places?  
And did your lady-mother's charms  
Consist in picklings, broilings, bastings?  
Or did she prate about the arms  
Her brave forefathers wore at Hastings?





WHERE were you *finished*? tell me  
where!

Was it at Chelsea, or at Chiswick?

Had you the ordinary share

Of books and backboard, harp and physic?

And did they bid you banish pride,

And mind your Oriental tinting?

And did you learn how Dido died,

And who found out the art of printing?



A

ND are you fond of lanes and  
brooks—

A votary of the sylvan Muses?

Or do you con the little books

Which Baron Brougham and Vaux diffuses?

Or do you love to knit and sew—

The fashionable world's Arachne?

Or do you canter down the Row

Upon a very long-tailed hackney?



A

ND do you love your brother  
James?

And do you pet his mares and  
setters?

And have your friends romantic names?

And do you write them long, long letters?

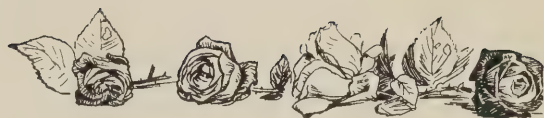
And are you—since the world began

All women are—a little spiteful?

And don't you dote on Malibran?

And don't you think Tom Moore delightful?





I SEE they've brought you  
flowers to-day ;  
Delicious food for eyes and  
noses ;

But carelessly you turn away  
From all the pinks, and all the  
roses ;

Say, is that fond look sent in search

Of one whose look as fondly answers ?

And is he, fairest, in the Church ?

Or is he—ain't he—in the Lancers ?



AND is your love a motley page  
Of black and white, half joy, half  
sorrow?

Are you to wait till you're of age?

Or are you to be his to-morrow?

Or do they bid you, in their scorn,

Your pure and sinless flame to smother?

Is he so very meanly born?

Or are you married to another?



W HATE'ER you are, at last, adieu !  
I think it is your bounden duty

To let the rhymes I coin for you

Be prized by all who prize your beauty.

From you I seek nor gold nor fame ;

From you I fear no cruel strictures ;

I wish some girls that I could name

Were half as silent as their pictures !





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